United Nations E/2015/58

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 April 2015

Original: English

2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Agenda item 12 (c)
Coordination, programme and other questions: mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2014/2, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution, including on the promotion of accountability at the national and global levels and on progress in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to the Council's substantive session of 2015. Accordingly, the present report aims at providing an overview of progress in implementing the Action Plan, including of entity-specific remedial action plans, lessons learned and next steps, and in mainstreaming gender equality in common programming processes of the United Nations at the country level, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and other planning frameworks. The report also includes recommendations for further progress to be considered by the Economic and Social Council.

15-05072 (E) 170415

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/2, adopted on 12 June 2014, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit, at its substantive session of 2015, a report on the implementation of the resolution, including on the promotion of accountability in the work of the United Nations system to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women at both the national and global levels and on progress made in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

2. The report is organized into five sections. Section I contains the introduction; section II provides an overview of progress in the implementation of the Action Plan; section III assesses the progress of the United Nations entities in promoting the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all operational mechanisms, including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and other development frameworks; section IV presents an overview of remaining gaps and challenges; and section V includes recommendations for accelerated action for consideration by the Council.

3. The report draws on information and data provided by 62 United Nations entities included in Action Plan reporting, on the annual reports of resident coordinators annual reports for 2014 available at the time of writing, the annual reports of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other secondary sources.

II. Promoting system-wide accountability for United Nations work on gender equality and the empowerment of women

4. In the third year of implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, relevant information was reported by 62 entities, including the Secretariat and its offices and departments, of the United Nations system.[1] The reporting revealed strengths, challenges and trends in the work of the United Nations system to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. Reporting indicated that the Action Plan framework had positively catalysed progress in gender mainstreaming. Overall, the proportion of ratings in the meets and exceeds requirements categories increased from 31 per cent to 51 per cent between 2012, the first year of reporting, and 2014 (see figure I). Further, during the same period, the indicators of gender-responsive auditing, knowledge generation and communication and strategic planning, saw an increase of 32 percentage points or more (see figure IV).

[1] Reports were not submitted by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations University, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. As only one of the six training and research institutes — the United Nations System Staff College — reported, a separate analysis of the category was not carried out, but its results are included in the global analysis.

5. Notably, 37 out of 62 reporting entities (59 per cent of all reporting entities) met or exceeded the requirements for the gender policy indicator in 2014, an increase from 48 per cent in 2013. An additional nine entities have committed to developing policies in 2015. Therefore, by the end of 2015, almost 75 per cent of United Nations entities will have such policies in place, which is significant given that gender policies constitute a key driver of institutional change. Entities with gender policies are performing better than those without: the 38 entities meeting or exceeding requirements for the gender policy indicator are, on average, meeting or exceeding requirements for 10 out of 15 indicators, compared to entities without gender policies meeting or exceeding requirements for an average of five indicators.

6. In contrast, between 2012 and 2014, relatively weaker performance in the areas of capacity assessment and development, financial allocation and tracking and gender architecture and parity reinforced the need for more intensified implementation and also made it clear that, without persistent commitment from senior leadership, the standards are not likely to be met by the 2017 deadline. Notably, 61 per cent of entities, 10 per cent more than in 2012, stated that senior management constituted one of the chief drivers of positive performance.

7. Qualitatively, Action Plan reporting showed steady improvement.[2] In 2014, approximately 66 per cent of remedial action plans qualified as satisfactory or better, compared with 62 per cent in 2013. The UN-Women help desk reviewed all reports to control for quality and accuracy of ratings,[3] suggesting revisions for 47 per cent of the reports, a decrease of almost 20 percentage points as compared to 2013, which indicates strengthened understanding of Action Plan standards and requirements. In addition, 80 per cent of recommendations from the help desk resulted in corresponding revisions.

A. Comparative analysis of overall United Nations system performance, by year

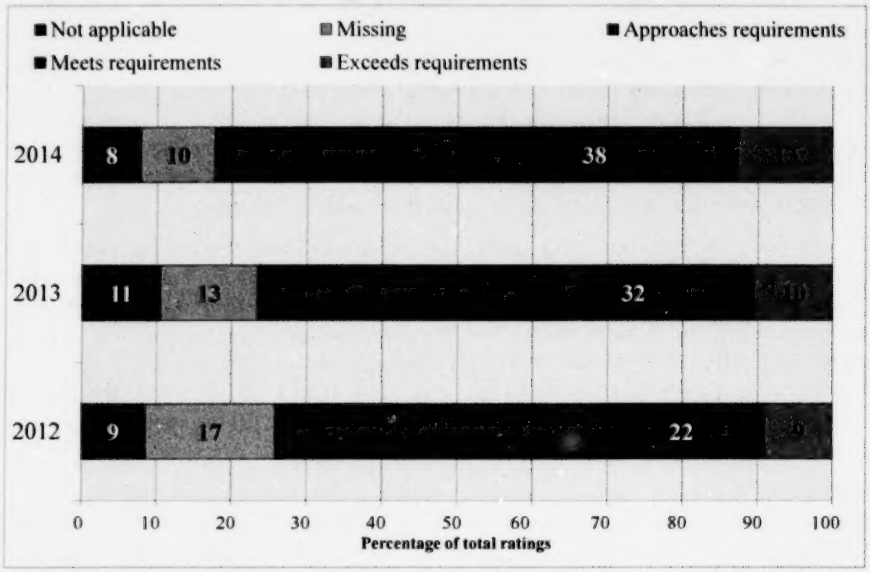
8. For comparability, the report presents results by year, performance indicator, entity type[4] and areas of strengths and improvement.

[2] In 2014, the online reporting system was enhanced to require substantiation with evidence for each sub-component of the indicators comprising multiple parts.

[3] A separate review analysis was carried out by the United Nations Evaluation Group on performance indicator 5, gender-responsive evaluation.

[4] Similar to 2012 and 2013, entities were grouped into four categories based on the standard United Nations organizational breakdown: funds and programmes, Secretariat, specialized entities and technical entities.

Figure I
Comparative analysis of overall ratings for the United Nations system, by year



Note: Percentages reflected in figure I are based upon all ratings reported, including "not applicable".

9. Overall, between 2012 and 2014, system-wide performance steadily shifted upward, from missing and approaches requirements ratings to meets and exceeds requirements ratings (figure I). In 2014, 51 per cent of ratings for the United Nations system were in the meets or exceeds requirements categories, an increase of nine percentage points since 2013 and 20 percentage points since 2012, constituting an average annual increase of 10 percentage points. The meets requirements rating registered the largest growth, from 22 per cent in 2012 to 38 per cent in 2014. The exceeds requirements rating for 2014 registered a three percentage point gain over 2013, tripling the gain between 2012 and 2013. Despite such gains, however, entities exceeded requirements in few instances (13 per cent).

B. Comparative analysis, by entity type

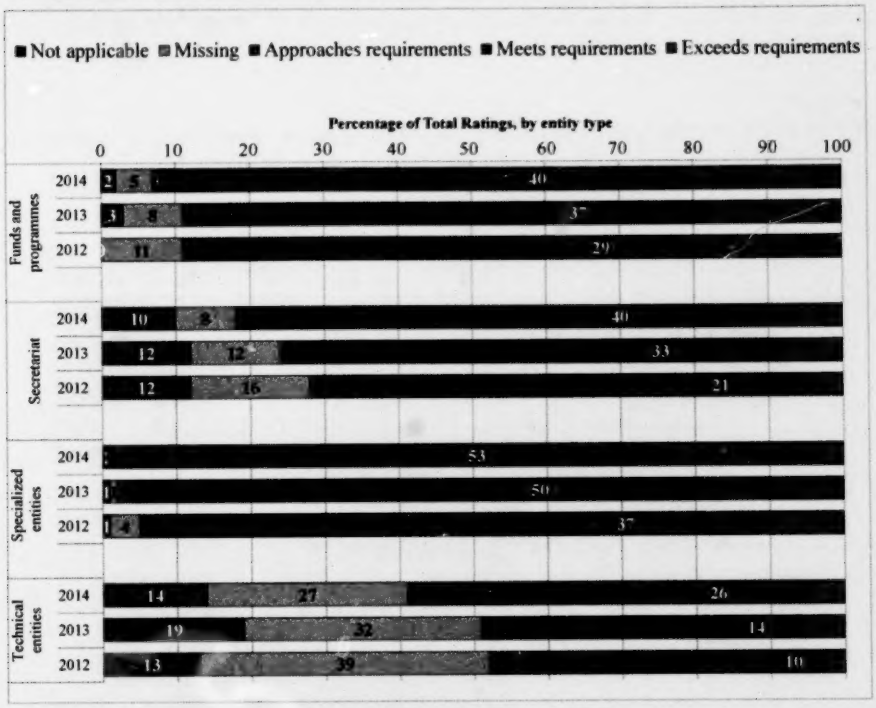
10. As shown in figure II, all entity types registered an improvement since 2013, with a progressive shift towards meets and exceeds requirements ratings from approaches requirements and missing.

11. Specialized entities continue to outperform other entity types, with 76 per cent of their ratings falling into the meets or exceeds requirements categories, at least 15 percentage points more than for other entity types, and a 28 percentage point increase since 2012. They also registered the largest gain (10 percentage points) in meeting and exceeding requirements ratings since 2013. As of 2014, all specialized entities met or exceeded requirements on six performance indicators, double the number of indicators met or exceeded in 2013: capacity assessment, coherence, gender-responsive performance management, monitoring and reporting, programme

review and strategic planning. Given such trends, specialized entities are well positioned to meet Action Plan requirements by 2017.

12. The funds and programmes, with a total of 61 per cent in the meets and exceeds requirements categories in 2014, registered steady gains of 7 percentage points since 2013 and 14 percentage points since 2012. In addition, all Funds and Programmes entities have met or exceeded requirements for the coherence indicator.

Figure II
Comparative analysis of ratings, by year and entity type



13. The Secretariat has similarly made gains since 2012, now reporting 50 per cent of all ratings as "meets" or "exceeds", up from 27 per cent in 2012. Meets requirements ratings showed the largest gains, from 21 per cent in 2012 to 40 per cent in 2014. While exceeds requirements ratings for the Secretariat increased by 4 percentage points between 2012 and 2014, its proportion of such ratings trails those of the specialized entities and the funds and programmes by at least 10 percentage points. Similar to the funds and programmes, all Secretariat entities have met or exceeded requirements for one indicator, gender-responsive auditing.

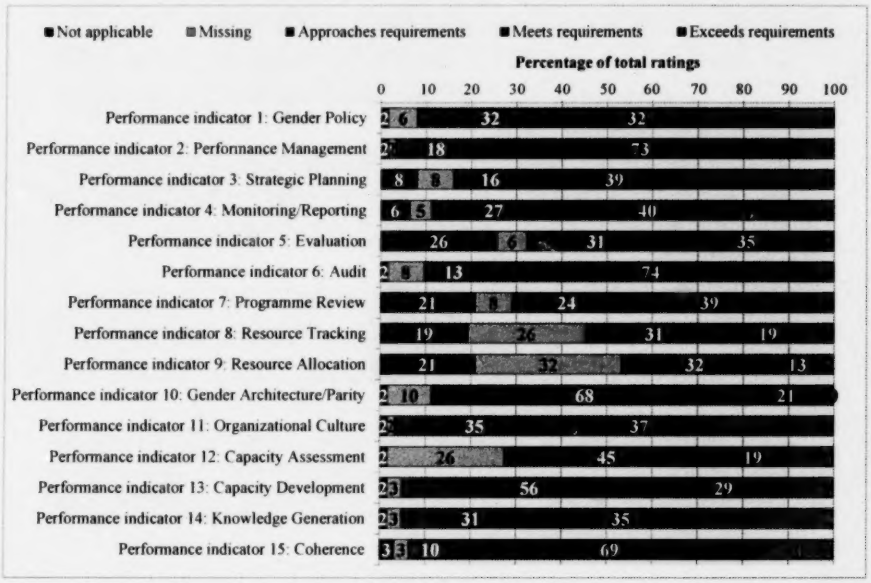
14. Entities with a technical focus registered the weakest performance among all entity types. For the third consecutive year, meets and exceeds requirements ratings comprised 30 per cent or less of all ratings. In addition, as a group, technical entities have not met requirements for any of the performance indicators. Nevertheless, over the three-year period, they registered a steady increase in the rate of improvement, with a 7 percentage point gain in the meets and exceeds requirements ratings

between 2012 and 2013, and an 11 percentage point increase between 2013 and 2014.

C. Comparative analysis, by performance indicator (PI): strengths and areas for improvement

15. When broken down by performance indicator, progress appears more uneven. Figure III provides a breakdown of all 2014 ratings, for all entities, by performance indicator. Figure IV provides a comparison of meets and exceeds requirements ratings, by indicator, for all three reporting years, ranked in descending order by their 2014 performance.

Figure III
2014 analysis of ratings for the United Nations system, by performance indicator


Not applicable
Missing
Approaches requirements
Meets requirements
Exceeds requirements
Percentage of total ratings
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Performance indicator 1: Gender Policy
Performance indicator 2: Performance Management
Performance indicator 3: Strategic Planning
Performance indicator 4: Monitoring/Reporting
Performance indicator 5: Evaluation
Performance indicator 6: Audit
Performance indicator 7: Programme Review
Performance indicator 8: Resource Tracking
Performance indicator 9: Resource Allocation
Performance indicator 10: Gender Architecture/Parity
Performance indicator 11: Organizational Culture
Performance indicator 12: Capacity Assessment
Performance indicator 13: Capacity Development
Performance indicator 14: Knowledge Generation
Performance indicator 15: Coherence

16. Figure III shows that ratings of meeting or exceeding requirements accounted for at least 50 per cent for 8 of the 15 performance indicators in 2014. For resource tracking, resource allocation and capacity assessment, 25 per cent or more of the entities were rated as missing, indicating that, while entities see the indicator as relevant to their work, more consistent and focused attention is needed. In addition, ratings of "not applicable" for evaluation, resource tracking, resource allocation and programme review reached 19 per cent or more, which was more than double the average of 8 per cent for the rating of "not applicable" in 2014.

Strengths

17. Figure IV shows that, in the third year of Action Plan implementation, the United Nations system as a whole registered progress for 14 of the 15 performance indicators. Exceptionally, the coherence indicator witnessed a decline in performance, mainly owing to stricter application of reporting requirements.

Notwithstanding this exception, the coherence indicator has registered the best performance among all 15 Action Plan indicators since 2012 and system-wide performance remains the highest in this area.

18. In 2014, the coherence indicator registered 89 per cent of entities as receiving a rating of meets or exceeds requirements. Following coherence, gender-responsive performance management and gender-responsive auditing registered the highest levels of compliance, with 75 per cent or more of all ratings in the meets or exceeds requirements categories.

19. The gender-responsive performance management indicator registered 81 per cent of entities as meeting or exceeding" requirements, up from 75 per cent in 2013 and 59 per cent in 2012. Secretariat-wide compliance on this indicator accounted for the large gains realized between 2012 and 2013, gains that were sustained for the most recent reporting period.

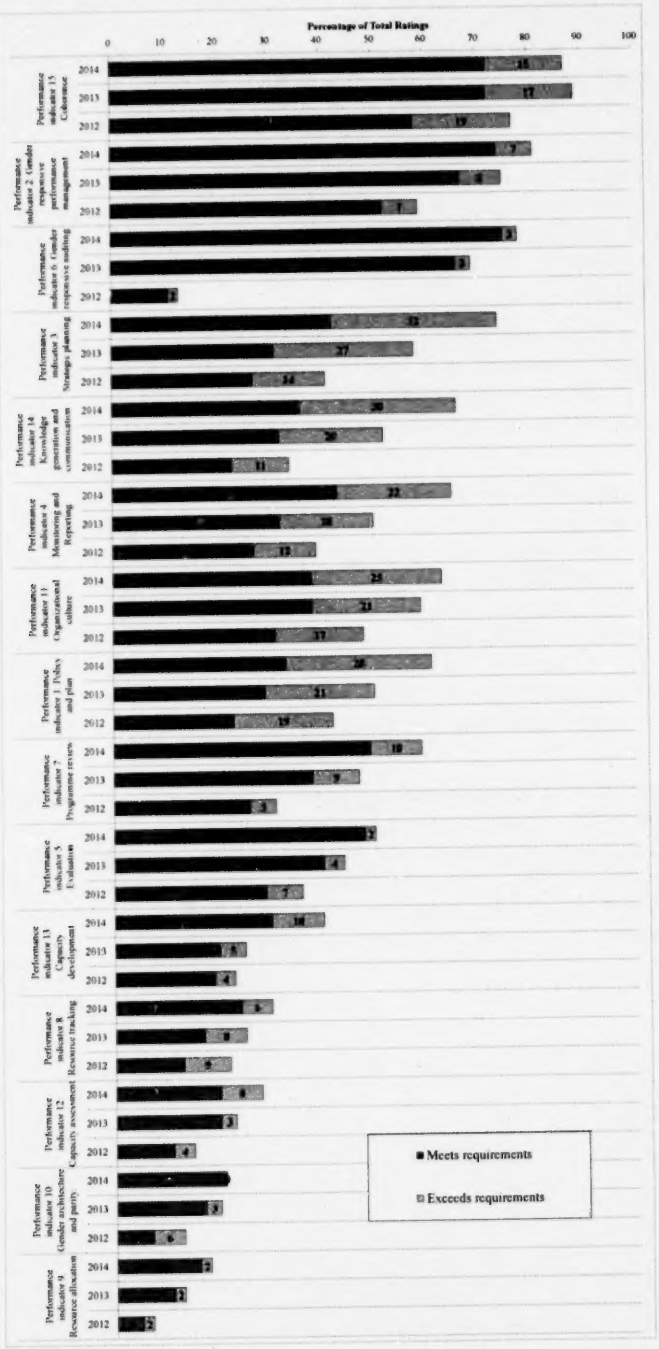
20. Indicators on strategic planning, monitoring and reporting, capacity development, knowledge generation and communication and gender policies registered the greatest performance gains since 2013, with total ratings for meets and exceeds requirements increasing between 11 and 16 percentage points from year to year.[5]

21. The strategic planning indicator witnessed the greatest progress since 2013, recording a 16 percentage point increase in the meets or exceeds requirements categories, with 74 per cent of entities currently meeting or exceeding requirements. This implies that almost three quarters of United Nations entities are including more than one results statement and indicator on gender equality in their strategic planning documents, thereby significantly enhancing accountability. Substantial gains were made for the monitoring and reporting indicator, where entities must report on results regarding gender equality and women's empowerment in relation to their central strategic planning documents in order to meet requirements for that indicator.

22. The capacity development indicator also registered significant progress. In 2014, 40 per cent of entities met or exceeded requirements in this domain, representing a 15 percentage point increase over 2013. In addition, 19 entities have committed to implementing, in 2015, the "I Know Gender" e-course, developed by UN-Women for non-gender specialists, thereby laying the foundation for staff across the United Nations system to be better equipped to deliver on gender mainstreaming mandates.

[5] In order to present strengths and areas for improvement more accurately, percentages in Figure IV were calculated omitting "not applicable" ratings. Therefore, percentages for meets and exceeds requirements will slightly differ from those presented in figure I, which bases percentages on all ratings, not applicable included.

Figure IV
Comparative analysis of meets and exceeds requirements ratings, by indicator, for all three years of reporting, ranked in descending order by 2014 performance



23. The knowledge generation and communication indicator experienced an increase of 14 percentage points between 2013 and 2014 in the "meets" or "exceeds" categories, reaching 66 per cent in 2014. These gains reflect the efforts of several entities to more systematically document and share knowledge on gender equality, including through new reports, the development and promotion of dedicated websites and pages, social media campaigns and numerous advocacy and awareness-raising events. In addition, there was an increase in the number of entities formally including gender equality as a component of their communication plans.

Areas for improvement

24. In 2014, the poorest performance areas for the United Nations system with regard to the Action Plan remained resource allocation, gender architecture and parity, capacity assessment and resource tracking, for which 30 per cent or less of the entities were rated as meeting or "exceeding" requirements. Not a single entity was rated as exceeding performance requirements for the gender architecture and parity indicator.

25. Resource allocation registered the weakest performance among all Action Plan indicators for the three consecutive years of reporting, despite minor improvements between 2013 and 2014, registering a 5 percentage point increase in the "meeting" and "exceeding" categories. In addition, remedial action plans for this indicator do not hold promise for improving performance by the 2017 deadline and, therefore, urgent attention is needed to support performance.

26. Gender architecture and parity remains a particularly weak area across the United Nations system, with only 21 per cent of ratings falling into the "meets" or "exceeds" categories, and a very slow rate of progress of a 1 percentage point increase in entities rated as "meets" or "exceeds" requirements from 2013 to 2014. This performance indicator includes three components:

(a) Regarding gender focal point systems, although 92 per cent of entities have a gender focal point or equivalent in place, only 61 per cent of them are at the P-4 level and above, despite repeated calls from the General Assembly in its resolutions for focal points to be designated at a sufficiently high level and enjoy full access to senior management. Further, only 66 per cent of gender focal points have terms of reference in writing and only 47 per cent devote 20 per cent or more of their time to functions related to gender equality.

(b) With respect to the equal representation of women at all levels, progress remains slow. Echoing results in 2013, 77 per cent of entities reported that they had not achieved equal representation of women at the P-4 level and above. The results illustrate a continuing challenge for the United Nations system to counteract the inverse relationship that exists between seniority and the representation of women;

(c) Concerning adequate resourcing, only 23 per cent of entities reported having a fully resourced gender unit or equivalent, thereby pointing to a particular concern. Notwithstanding the progress achieved, the continued inadequacy of both human and financial resources can be expected to jeopardize the rate of progress, especially in areas which represent more entrenched challenges.

27. With respect to capacity assessment, system-wide performance against the indicator remains relatively poor, although slightly improved in 2014: only 28 per

cent of entities meet or exceed ratings, up from 23 per cent in 2013. However, significant progress could be made with the systematic application and adaptation of the capacity assessment tool developed UN-Women Training Centre throughout the system.

28. Finally, resource tracking registered limited gains, with an increase from 25 per cent to 30 per cent between 2013 and 2014 in the meets and exceeds requirements categories. Encouragingly, however, remedial actions for resource tracking seemed robust. For example, 18 entities are currently seeking to undertake resource tracking, of which 8 are planning to adopt a gender marker system. In addition, 9 out of 33 Secretariat departments noted that tracking resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women ought to be done centrally through a common platform. Accordingly, of the 12 entities that rated this indicator as "not applicable", 10 are Secretariat departments. Improved understanding of the resources being spent on gender equality can subsequently assist entities in setting and meeting more realistic financial benchmarks, thus helping to improve performance in all areas.

D. Remedial action plans

29. Remedial action plans, articulated in terms of timelines, responsibility for follow-up action and resources required to achieve progress, delineate the steps that entities plan to take to improve performance for each specific indicator.

30. Given the 2017 deadline to meet or exceed requirements for all Action Plan indicators, the number of individual activities to improve performance outlined by all entities increased from 91 in 2013 to 170 in 2014. Similar to 2012 and 2013, capacity assessment, capacity development, resource tracking and policies comprised the areas most targeted for enhanced activity by entities. Regarding responsibility for follow-up, in 79 per cent of cases where information was provided, staff other than the gender focal point or unit were designated as being responsible for follow-up action, which indicates a broadening of the web of engagement and responsibility for gender mainstreaming within entities.

31. Entities identified resources required to further improve performance. They estimated that approximately $18 million would be required, a sum that is not particularly large considering the number of entities participating in the Action Plan. In 2014, similar to 2013, the largest share of resource requirement (22 per cent) was directed at the area of gender architecture and parity. Gender-responsive auditing (16 per cent) and policy and plan (11 per cent) ranked second and third, respectively, in the share of resources required.

E. Lessons learned and next steps

32. Lessons learned in three years of Action Plan implementation include:

(a) Sustained coordination by UN-Women effectively drives progress and engagement and also supports the capacity-building, communication and networking required to implement the Action Plan;

(b) Success is predicated significantly on the dedication of senior management to gender equality and the empowerment of women and on their consistent commitment and visible messaging that "sets the tone at the top";

(c) Adequate human and financial resources to support gender units and focal points within and across entities, together with sufficient capacities for gender mainstreaming work, are critical for progress on the Action Plan performance indicators. In 2014, 24 per cent of entities stated that the lack of sufficient resources for gender equality constituted one of the greatest impediments to progress for their entity in the area of gender equality. When capacity-building activities are continuous, gender equality work can be effectively sustained;

(d) The development and updating of gender policies strongly correlates with and effectively drives progress in gender mainstreaming;

(e) Strengthened and unambiguous gender analysis in strategic planning documents serves as the foundation for longer-term sustainability;

(f) The creation of wider networks for the promotion of gender mainstreaming within and across entities is essential not only to the decentralization of responsibility for gender equality but also to ensuring the long-term sustainability of results;

(g) A common understanding of standards and requirements for gender mainstreaming and the publishing of results on the status of implementation of a common framework can lead to healthy competition between entities, reinvigorating efforts to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system;

(h) Strong and explicit endorsement of the Action Plan initiative by intergovernmental bodies significantly bolsters participation and compliance with the framework;

33. Suggested next steps to intensify efforts for ensuring that the United Nations system meets all requirements by 2017 include:

(a) Continued development of gender policies, strategies and platforms aligned with the Action Plan to cover all entities, as well as common approaches to implementation for some Action Plan indicators (i.e., a central system for tracking resources), are needed to improve the performance of small and technically-focused entities and of the department and offices within the Secretariat;

(b) Significant financial and staff investment in promoting the equal representation of women, especially the implementation of temporary special measures as mandated by article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, strengthened work-life balance, mobility and facilitative policies, and increased accountability of senior departmental management for reaching gender balance targets;

(c) Intensified and coordinated development of gender marker systems for entity and system-wide capacity development, a help desk, development of training materials, continued consultation through the Financial and Budget Network of the High-level Committee on Management and systematic efforts with the Secretariat to embed tracking mechanisms into common platforms such as the enterprise resource planning system, Umoja;

(d) Continued implementation of mandatory introductory gender equality courses for all staff and intensified application of gender capacity assessment tools;

(e) Wider knowledge-sharing relating to all Action Plan indicators, including through a knowledge gateway that houses supporting documents, good practices and guidance and capacity-building documents for each indicator of the Action Plan;

(f) Increased attention to entity-to-entity peer reviews, which function as accountability and lesson-learning exercises.

III. Gender mainstreaming into operational mechanisms

34. 2015 marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Comprehensive reviews of the implementation of both documents were undertaken at the national and regional levels. A global report on the review submitted to the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women showed that, while opportunities have expanded for women and girls in some parts of world, progress has been unacceptably slow and the most marginalized women and girls are being left behind (E/CN.6/2015/3).

35. The findings of the review constitute an invaluable source of information and guidance towards the definition of the development framework that will guide the international agenda over the next 15 years. The review process has provided guidance to the entities of the United Nations system, including its funds and programmes, in contributing, within their mandate, to the full implementation of the strategic objectives of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It has also given the United Nations system the opportunity to reinvigorate political will and commitment, strengthen the evidence and knowledge base, enhance social and resource mobilization and revitalize public engagement and solidarity around gender equality and women's rights. In this connection, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the High-level Committee on Programmes coordinated a joint statement of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination joint statement, through which the Chief Executives committed to systematic gender mainstreaming, investment, results and accountability.

36. In the outcome of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Member States pledged, in a political declaration, to take further concrete action to ensure the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in order to achieve concrete results towards the full realization of gender equality and women's empowerment by 2030 (see E/2015/27-E/CN.6/2015/10, chap. I, sect. C). The strategies towards this aim include strengthening and increasing support for institutional mechanisms, targeting the transformation of discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes, significantly increasing investment to close resource gaps, strengthening accountability for the implementation of existing commitments and enhancing capacity-building, data collection, monitoring and evaluation.

37. The review process coincides with the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. Member States have made a strong call for the agenda to be firmly anchored in the human rights principles of universality, equality and non-discrimination, participation and

inclusion and accountability. The report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (A/68/970 and Corr. 1), which was confirmed by the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/309, as the main basis for negotiations of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, included the recommendation for a distinct, comprehensive and transformative goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. In addition, cross-cutting gender equality targets are part of the other proposed sustainable development goals and of the means of implementation. The sustainable development goals, in their final form, will require United Nations entities to support Member States in monitoring and reviewing the implementation process and ensuring that accountability mechanisms are in place to achieve targets.

38. Other milestones are also shaping the direction of the United Nations system's future, including the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Third United Nations Conference on Financing for Development. All of these processes and milestones provide an opportunity to strengthen gender mainstreaming and to ensure that gender equality, women's human rights and women's empowerment feature prominently in the United Nations system's support for development, human rights and peace and security.

39. The following section, drawing on the review of the available annual reports of resident coordinators for 2014, the annual reports of UN-Women country teams/offices for 2014 and other secondary sources of information, places special emphasis on assessing progress in mainstreaming gender at the country level, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks.

A. Alignment of gender equality programming with national priorities across sectors in all legislation, policies and programmes

40. Better integration, coherence and coordination of international development inputs and their harmonization with national government frameworks have long been concerns of the development community. The principles of a programme approach apply to the integration of gender perspectives into country responses. For gender-integrated approaches operating within development programming, additional measures targeted towards women's rights or marginalized groups of women and men are necessary in order to achieve real empowerment.

41. An essential lesson highlighted in the annual coordinator reports of resident coordinators for 2014 is that alignment with national priorities can be achieved by building strategic partnerships with key players in gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. In 2014, the office of UN-Women in Egypt, in partnership with the Post-2015 Coalition and a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), hosted a 10-woman delegation from the Arab region to brief international policymakers, Governments, academics, donors and the media on successes and lessons learned in implementing key international standards, influencing policies and raising awareness of national priorities.

42. In South Africa, the United Nations country team provided support to a national gender summit held to provide a platform for critical debate on the attainment of gender equality as the country celebrated 20 years of democracy. In

addition to achieving a coordinated voice for the United Nations system in gender equality, the summit served as an important resource for the country as it provided critical analysis on the status of gender equality by taking stock of gender equality gains while critically assessing persistent shortcomings and gaps.

43. Discussion on the sustainable development goals has been at the forefront of the work of United Nations country team with policymakers and civil society. The annual reports of resident coordinators stressed the role that United Nations country teams played in facilitating dialogue on the post-2015 consultations and partnerships, including with civil society organizations, women's and social movements, the media and private sector representatives. For example, the office of UN-Women in Indonesia provided technical assistance to the Government in preparing the country report for the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and facilitated participation of the Government and NGOs at the regional conference. UN-Women played a key role in negotiating with the Government and facilitating civil society organization advocacy on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

B. Coordination mechanisms at the country level

44. Inter-agency mechanisms at the country level play a key role in ensuring United Nations coherence and joint positions and actions on gender equality.

45. The standard operating procedures for the second generation of "Delivering as one" countries are firmly anchored in the shared values, norms and standards of the United Nations system and in the common delivery of results, including on cross-cutting issues such as human rights and gender equality. United Nations country teams have an opportunity to use coordination mechanisms within the standard operating procedures, such as the joint results groups, to enhance coherence and the mainstreaming of gender into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework/One Programme.

46. The annual reports of resident coordinators for 2014 stressed joint programming initiatives in different thematic areas aimed at promoting explicit gender analysis and programming guidance in the terms of reference, the sustained contribution of dedicated gender experts, the investment of substantial resources in both gender-targeted and gender-integrated programmes in a wide range of countries, and accountability mechanisms to ensure that guidelines for gender inclusion are implemented. For example, in Mexico, UN-Women carried out several bilateral inter-agency initiatives for joint advocacy in key priority areas. Specifically, UN-Women joined forces with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to address the situation of women's human rights defenders and indigenous women's rights and to monitor compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to promote the recognition of domestic work and the ratification of the Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189); with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund regarding the reduction of adolescent pregnancy; and with UNFPA and OHCHR to promote the incorporation of reproductive rights into legal reforms. UN-Women also coordinates the Interagency Gender Working Group, formally composed of 15 agencies.

47. In addition, global advocacy campaigns, such as "UNiTE to End Violence against Women", have spurred greater engagement by other United Nations entities, including within United Nations country teams, to strengthen coherence, coordination and advocacy across United Nations system entities and across countries.

48. The gender theme groups play an important role in convening representatives of United Nations entities working on gender at the country level, which leads to team building with national partners, to influence the development agenda from a gender equality perspective. In 2014, the annual reports of resident coordinators recognized the role of gender theme groups in providing technical support in mainstreaming programming principles, such as gender equality, and their aligning with the national priorities in that area; monitoring progress towards the mainstreaming of gender into the integrated annual workplans and United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes; supporting capacity-building for Government institutions in relation to national gender equality priorities; and promoting the inclusion of gender equality networks in planning and programme implementation.

49. For example, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Nations, through its human rights and gender team group, jointly supports the Government in developing an action plan for addressing the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its concluding observations on the country's combined fourth and fifth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/MKD/CO/4-5). This effort resulted in the recommendations having been debated by representatives of the Government's intersectoral advisory group on gender equality. Also, on the basis of inputs from all relevant ministries, the Government's first action plan in response to recommendations by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was designed, then discussed at a public hearing organized by the parliamentary commission for equal opportunities between women and men, and is expected to be adopted by the Government in early 2015. In Mexico, a gender theme group is implementing a self-assessment survey for all United Nations staff working in the country to establish a clear baseline of the general knowledge and capacities of country staff, in order to guide the capacity-building efforts to be implemented by the gender theme group and inform the United Nations country team on the state-of-the-art.

50. Through its presence in "Delivering as one" countries, UN-Women promotes accountability and strategic advocacy and communicates with one voice on gender equality issues within the United Nations country teams. For example, in Nepal, UN-Women has been able to leverage its consistent commitment to joint programming in order to respond better to the changing funding environment. The country's new development cooperation policy, adopted in June 2014, introduced many changes in development cooperation funding. UN-Women has invested resources and time in enhancing the competence of staff on results-based management and programme essentials. Senior management colleagues have often stepped in to steer the joint programme discussions and negotiations. UN-Women has also consistently leveraged the convening role of resident coordinator to advance joint initiatives.

51. In the humanitarian sector, there have also been efforts to mainstream gender through inter-agency coordinated response programmes in a number of crisis-

affected countries. The United Nations country team in Sierra Leone launched its Ebola gender mainstreaming strategy in relation to the response to Ebola in October. Similarly, the United Nations country team in Liberia has approved a gender strategy in relation to the response to Ebola, which calls for women's participation in the response to Ebola response, better collection and use of sex-disaggregated data, and re-establishing trust in public health services.

52. During the reporting period, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, through its gender in humanitarian action reference group, published gender alerts on the developing crises in Iraq, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the countries affected by Ebola. The gender alerts highlight the key gender equality issues relating to specific humanitarian crises and are disseminated as guidance notes for all humanitarian stakeholders, including the in-country official United Nations coordinated humanitarian system.

53. During the reporting period, the Gender Standby Capacity project provided gender equality capacity as part of humanitarian activities to the humanitarian system coordinated by the United Nations at the global cluster level and in 11 crisis-affected countries. While being hosted by a variety of United Nations entities, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, gender-advisers offer guidance to the cluster system, the humanitarian coordinator and humanitarian coordination team, as well as to individual implementing agencies, on how best to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are adequately integrated into the planning and implementation of humanitarian response, preparedness and transition to recovery.

C. Greater accountability in the work of United Nations country teams on gender equality

54. An indispensable component of the United Nations system being fit for purpose is to ensure that the system is accountable in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Action Plan has built the foundation for this. At the country level, UN-Women has continued to promote a two-track approach to gender mainstreaming in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, striving for both dedicated results at the outcome level as well as mainstreaming gender through other priority result areas, as in the case of Afghanistan. Also, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the annual review report of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2014, completed in May 2014, addresses gender issues in most of the report. Most of the issues dealt with in that country were related to sexual violence in conflict situations. The midterm review of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework is planned for mid-2015 and UN-Women will be the co-lead for the pillar on governance. To ensure effective gender mainstreaming in the midterm review process, the gender team of the "One United Nations" initiative has been organized to address all the gender issues in a systematic manner.

55. The strategic use of country-level accountability mechanisms (such as the gender scorecard) has resulted in greater focus on inequalities in the work of United Nations country teams. For example, in Cambodia,, the results of the gender scorecard contributed to the prioritization exercise within the United Nations

country team and with partners, resulting in the inclusion of the outcome-level gender results within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. In late 2014, UN-Women initiated, within the context of the United Nations Development Group, a second global review of the use the gender scorecard by United Nations country teams. The review will provide important information on the performance of United Nations country teams in various accountability dimensions and will inform the updating and upgrading of country-level accountability mechanisms for gender equality, including through closer alignment with the Action Plan.

56. In order to effectively coordinate gender equality and women's empowerment within the United Nations system, the United Nations country team in Somalia conducted a gender scorecard exercise to assess the strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement with regard to the extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment are mainstreamed throughout its activities. Completion of the gender scorecard led to recommendations that the gender theme group provide policy advisory support and guidance to the United Nations country team, that the gender strategy of the country team be finalized, that the mainstreaming of gender into joint programmes be strengthened and systematized, that gender commitments be strengthened through partnerships and that, as an internal measure for the country team, a gender-proactive culture needed to be cultivated.

D. Human and financial resources for gender equality programming

57. As called for by the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/226, the strategic priorities of the United Nations Development Group for 2013-2016 are such that the United Nations country teams, together with Member States, should promote joint funding approaches, including through better budgetary planning, common budgetary frameworks, strengthening and rationalizing joint funding and resource mobilization mechanisms, as well as through supporting the extension of these joint funding approaches for advancing "Delivering as one" initiative and translating good practices on cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, into instruments designed to support implementation. There is an urgent need, however, for committing predictable and substantial funding to all sectors and themes, so as to counter the ongoing challenges of understaffing and underfunding.

58. For example, office of UN-Women in Albania reported resource mobilization efforts through 2014 focused primarily on securing extended support from Sweden via the One United Nations Coherence Fund, with $534,000 secured as the first tranche of three from Sweden for the period 2014 to 2016. The ability of UN-Women to secure further funds in future tranches will strongly depend on delivery. In 2014, the UN-Women programme office in Tajikistan considerably expanded the portfolio of women's economic empowerment project and started work in 12 districts (versus three districts in 2013). However, the programme expansion was not supported by an increase in human resources. This has placed significant workload pressure on all staff members. Donors providing cost-sharing funding for UN-Women projects tend to envisage project staff and administrative costs as being covered by UN-Women.

59. United Nations entities continue to invest in increasing their capacity to ensure the mainstreaming of gender into their programmes of work and operational

activities by tailoring internal expertise, strengthening coordination and synergies and maximizing resources. For example, UN-Women supported ILO in Cabo Verde by promoting a gender approach in the proposal to integrate decent work in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and supported the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in the promotion of gender and corporate social responsibility. As it provided a very complete portrait of the gender profile of Cabo Verde, the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was widely disseminated among United Nations country teams.

60. The resident coordinator system continues to be the entry point for UN-Women to coordinate gender responsive operational activities. In its role as a United Nations country team gender adviser, UN-Women contributes to the provision of technical advice to different agencies in several processes, provides technical support to United Nations country teams on gender mainstreaming in programme areas and on building national capacities, increases the visibility of UN-Women within the United Nations country team and at country level, and supports the fielding of gender advisers within the offices of resident coordinators in countries where UN-Women does not have a full-fledged country office. For example, responding to a request from women's organizations, the office of UN-Women in Colombia, in close collaboration with the resident coordinator's office and in coordination with 11 United Nations organizations in the country, convened a national summit on women and peace to provide a forum for input from women into the ongoing peace process. The summit convened nearly 500 women from all over Colombia, who put forth over 1,000 proposals on each point of the peace negotiation agenda, specifically demanding that the peace negotiators not rest until they had reached a peace agreement and that women be present at the peace negotiation table. One month after the summit, the Government appointed two women to its negotiating team in Havana, raising women's representation at the peace talks to 40 per cent of the Government's delegation.

E. Capacity development

61. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, called for the use of gender expertise within the United Nations system to assist in the preparation process of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other development programming frameworks, thereby ensuring that gender dimensions are systematically addressed, and requested an increase in the investment in and focus on outcomes and outputs relating to gender equality in United Nations development framework programmes.

62. To address the resolution, UN-Women produced a guidance note on mainstreaming gender into development programming to help bridge gaps between global norms and actual implementation in policymaking and programming at the country level. The guidance note of the United Nations Development Group on gender equality markers, which was developed under the leadership of UN-Women, endorsed by the United Nations Development Group and transmitted to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, helps institute gender markers across the United Nations system to make it possible not only to account for and monitor financial allocations to gender equality and women's empowerment

but also to motivate organizations and to produce comparable data. In order to provide expertise and knowledge to United Nations country teams, UN-Women led the development of a resource book of the United Nations Development Group *on mainstreaming gender in United Nations common programming at the country level*, which supports prioritizing and mainstreaming gender equality issues in United Nations common programming processes at the country level. The resource book is intended as a practical tool, based on existing guidance combined with practical experience, and as a resource for gender advocates and those responsible for mainstreaming gender into United Nations common programming processes at the country level. In addition, "I Know Gender" e-course has been made available to all United Nations entities. The course will be complemented by additional mandatory satellite modules.

63. Knowledge and technical expertise to support the work of United Nations country teams has proved to be critical to further strengthening and sustaining their efforts on gender mainstreaming, as confirmed by the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. UN-Women led the establishment of the United Nations Development Group gender experts roster, with a pool of 33 United Nations experts trained to support resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to better address gender equality in the various phases of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework/One Programme (i.e. road mapping, country analysis, strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation). With approximately 40 countries rolling out new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in 2015, sustaining the availability of United Nations expertise on gender equality to United Nations country teams and their partners will be a key part of the coordination role of UN-Women.

F. Comparable data disaggregated by sex and age

64. Working with partners, UN-Women has continue to emphasize the importance of gender statistics. The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality initiative, implemented by UN-Women, the Statistics Division of the Secretariat and other partners, has continued to compile gender indicators on health, education and employment. Working with the World Bank and the Bureau of Statistics of Uganda, a methodological experiment on measuring asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective was initiated and tested in order to contribute to the development of internationally accepted standards for such measurements. The list of pilot countries was finalized in 2014 and countries will begin collecting data in 2015. UN-Women has worked with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics to improve the availability and collection of gender statistics globally and took part in the expert group's eighth annual meeting and the Fifth Global Forum on Gender Statistics, both of which took place in Mexico, in November 2014.

65. In Ukraine, UN-Women provided expert support to the monitoring missions of the OHCHR, of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the mission of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. UN-Women shared knowledge, gender-sensitive statistics and evidence from civil society organizations, among other data. In order to respond to new challenges, four local gender experts, identified and recruited by UN-Women, provided support in assessing recovery and peacebuilding in eastern Ukraine from a gender perspective. They assessed the differing impact of military conflict on women's and men's lives

and developed recommendations for supporting infrastructure, social services, economic recovery and social resilience.

66. In addition, a minimum set of 52 gender indicators, developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, is being used as a basic reference for the development of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and should be used whenever possible given that key United Nations agencies have been tasked for collecting such data. The indicators have been supplemented by a set of nine core indicators for measuring violence against women. The main benefits of harmonized indicators include having a platform for unifying various reports, providing guidance for Governments, the United Nations system, civil society organizations and other stakeholders, contributing to increasing efficiency and effectiveness of Governments, contributing to inter-agency coordination and collaboration, assisting in the coordination between the national and local levels, guiding policymakers in budgeting and in viewing international obligations in conjunction with national priorities.

IV. Conclusions and remaining challenges

67. A confluence of intergovernmental processes and milestones is shaping the direction of the future of the United Nations system. In the area of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the confluence provides opportunities to accelerate implementation and to ensure that gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment feature prominently in a new development agenda.

68. In moving forward, the United Nations system must ensure that it is fit for purpose to support Member States in the implementation of a gender-responsive agenda in the post-2015 era. Gender mainstreaming remains a primary strategy for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, yet sustained efforts are needed to ensure that it effectively yields development results for women and girls worldwide.

69. Experiences and lessons learned in recent years since the adoption the Economic and Social Council of its agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming (see A/52/3/Rev.1, chap. IV, secy. A) and the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, as well as the results derived from the implementation of the Action Plan, should guide future work on gender mainstreaming and be the basis for ensuring that the United Nations system plays a transformative role in the full implementation of the post-2015 development framework.

70. The United Nations system must capitalize on the findings of the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review , according to which gender is the area where United Nations system support was most appreciated by Member States.

71. The Action Plan has proved to be an innovative approach with demonstrable and measurable results in a short timespan. The experience over the past three years illustrates that with a dedicated, pioneering and participatory approach to coordination, as led by UN-Women, a system-wide accountability framework can catalyse positive change with the desired outcomes across the United Nations system.

72. The Action Plan has facilitated more effective engagement within and across entities and revitalized a system-wide network that promotes leadership, coherence and dynamic action. It has defined, monitored and driven progress towards a common set of standards and served as a model for accountability and collective action, in no small measure thanks to the abiding support of United Nations entities at multiple levels. The scope, simplicity and clarity of its methods and the metrics it introduces have been replicated by other groups (e.g., in entities working to promote the rights of youth and indigenous peoples). Furthermore, its uniform and harmonized methodology yields a baseline against which to measure progress, stimulating the analytic and evidence-based advocacy that is essential to sustainability.

73. At the country level, United Nations country teams are making progress in mainstreaming gender in common programming processes, from country analysis, to planning, monitoring and evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. Yet there are still areas in which improvement is needed.

74. Strengthening the mandate of UN-Women, in coordination within United Nations country teams and at regional levels, to enhance gender mainstreaming within the system, as well as developing and sharing user-friendly tools and providing support to United Nations country teams, have proved effective strategies to improve gender mainstreaming. The wider acknowledgment of the mandate of UN-Women within the United Nations system has contributed to increased requests for support to promote gender equality through guidance and advice. The lack of human resources specialized in critical programme areas, however, has often negatively impacted programme results.

75. Reporting offices stressed that early engagement in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework development processes generates better results. Joint programmes, coordinated delivery and implementation mechanisms within the United Nations system contribute to better gender mainstreaming in United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and, in turn, to effectiveness in achieving gender equality goals at the country level. Cabo Verde, a "Delivering as one" country, was singled out by a review of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework as a country that showcased evidence of such effective inter-agency collaboration. However, devoting greater attention to strategic planning and monitoring, including technical support to implementing partners, remains a challenge.

76. It is important to ensure national ownership through continued stakeholder engagement and the embedding of accountability into local institutions. The participatory tools used in the implementation of gender programme work have contributed to the enhancement of collaboration and partnerships among key stakeholders and the implementing agencies of the United Nations, which has led to the empowerment and commitment of local partners. It is important to use community and civil society mobilization to strengthen grass-roots voice and action and to support local communities in defining locally owned and managed development objectives.

77. Resource mobilization remains a significant challenge. Fulfilling gender equality commitments in the post-2015 context will require robust and adequate financing. Commitments of predictable and substantial funding for large-scale gender equality programming across sectors and themes continues to be stressed as

critical to countering the ongoing challenge of understaffing and underfunding across gender equality work in the United Nations system. Resident coordinators stress that gender-responsive interventions require dedicated financial resources, including through joint resource mobilization.

78. There is still a need to further improve monitoring and data collection methods with a view to enhancing the United Nations system's evidence-based analytical programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its operational activities for development.

V. Recommendations

79. The United Nations system has a strong role to play in supporting the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action through the pursuit of systematic gender mainstreaming, including in the post-2015 context. The Economic and Social Council may wish to request the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies and funds and programmes, to:

(a) Redouble efforts to implement the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to ensure full compliance with its performance standards by all entities of the United Nations system;

(b) Intensify investments to address critical areas of the Action Plan, including the areas of policy development, resource tracking and allocation, the equal representation of women, capacity development and assessment, peer reviews and gender-responsive auditing;

(c) Continue to align gender equality programming with national priorities across sectors, including by supporting capacity-building for Government institutions in relation to national gender equality priorities, building strategic partnerships and integrating gender equality networks into planning and programme implementation;

(d) Further enhance technical expertise in gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system to assist the preparation and implementation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other development programme frameworks, ensuring that gender dimensions are systematically addressed;

(e) Leverage the leadership and convening role of resident coordinators to address gender equality as an integral part of the work of United Nations country teams, including through joint initiatives and strengthened coordination of gender-responsive operational activities across sectors;

(f) Enhance the competence of staff in results-based management and programming;

(g) Promote strategic advocacy and coherent communications on gender equality issues within United Nations country teams;

(h) Continue to work closely with humanitarian coordinators to integrate gender equality into all facets of humanitarian action and ensure the human rights of women, girls, men and boys are equally promoted and protected, with equitable access to services;

(i) Substantially increase resources to deliver results, especially under the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, including through better budgetary planning, common budgetary frameworks and strengthening and rationalizing joint funding mechanisms and joint resource mobilization efforts, as well as strengthening the predictability and sustainability of funding, broadening the donor base and increasing the flexibility of non-core resources;

(j) Continue to develop and enhance standards and methodologies, for use at the national and international levels, to improve the collection and use of data and statistics disaggregated by sex and age to improve guidance to country programming;

(k) Support the application of a gender perspective in the preparation of organization-wide and country-level documents, such as strategic, programmatic and results-based frameworks and evaluations, and continue to promote more coherent, accurate and effective monitoring and reporting on gender equality progress, impact and common indicators for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

(l) Continue to promote the institutionalization of robust accountability systems, with a focus on assessing gender mainstreaming, including at the level of United Nations country teams, by capitalizing on the design and implementation experience of the Action Plan, while both expanding and drawing on assets and resources instituted to support such implementation;

(m) Facilitate complementarity among accountability instruments at the global and country levels;

(n) Strive for both dedicated outcome level results and the mainstreaming of gender equality considerations through other priority result areas and results;

(o) Ensure prioritization and funding for meeting gender-related targets across the post-2015 development framework.